

every other family in America and help us get beyond this recession.

Also, the President starts eliminating the subsidies, the Federal subsidies for oil companies. I don't have to remind Americans what the price of gasoline is; they know it. In Illinois it is over \$4 a gallon in many places I traveled to during the recess. These oil companies are witnessing the highest profits in the history of American business. The President has said, and I agree: It is time to cut the Federal subsidy, the tax subsidy for oil companies, these profitable companies that make so much money for their shareholders and give so many bonuses to their officers.

Many Republicans object. They do not want to raise taxes on the oil companies. They do not want to raise taxes on the wealthiest people in America. I think they ought to put it in perspective. If we can help middle-income and working families get through the recession, stop living paycheck to paycheck and have a little bit of a cushion in their lives, if we can give small businesses incentive to hire Americans and turn this economy around, that is what America needs. Let's get beyond the rhetoric that has stalled efforts in Washington. Let's get beyond the obstructionism and the obstacles. Let us finally work together with the President's leadership and come up with a plan to put America back to work.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

#### TRIBUTE TO SERGEANT DAKOTA MEYER

Mr. McCONNELL. In a ceremony at the White House this afternoon, SGT Dakota Meyer of the U.S. Marine Corps will become the first living Marine recipient of the Medal of Honor, our Nation's highest award for valor, the first recipient in 41 years.

The Medal of Honor is awarded for conspicuous gallantry and bravery at the risk of one's own life, above and beyond the call of duty.

Every American can be proud of Sergeant Meyer, age 23, for his exceptional valor in combat in Afghanistan. I am particularly proud that Sergeant Meyer is a Kentuckian. I am honored that heroes like him come from the Bluegrass State. Sergeant Meyer hails from Columbia, KY, and is a 2006 graduate of Green County High School where he played on the football team. On September 8, 2009, his unit assignment was with Marine Embedded Training Team 2-8, Regional Corps Advisory Command 3-7, operating in Kunar Province, Afghanistan. That day he was sent to aid a group of marines, soldiers, and Afghans trapped under heavy enemy fire from three different sides. "We're surrounded," one of them broadcast over the radio. "They're moving in on us."

Air support to assist the Marines was unavailable, as the fighting was too

fierce for helicopters to land. Then Corporal Meyer requested permission to enter the zone of fire to come to their aid four times, and four times his request was denied. After four denials he decided to go anyway, in an armored vehicle mounted with a .50-caliber machine gun with one other marine as a driver. Twice they attempted to reach their comrades and twice were forced back by bullets, rocket-propelled grenades, and mortars. A bullet hit the vehicle's gun turret, striking Corporal Meyer's elbow with shrapnel. Ignoring his injury, he left the vehicle and charged ahead alone to rescue his fellow fighters. Under intense enemy fire, he reached a trench where helicopter pilots had reported their position. There he found his three fellow marines and a Navy hospital corpsman all dead from gunshot wounds. Still under fire, Corporal Meyer carried their bodies back to a humvee with the help of Afghan troops and escorted them to a forward-operating base about 1 mile away. He was determined to fulfill the Marines' credo, to never leave a marine behind. Corporal Meyer and the three marines whom he refused to abandon all knew each other well and worked together in the same four-man training team. He considered them close friends.

In addition to the four Americans Corporal Meyer pulled out of the firefight, a U.S. Army soldier and at least eight Afghan troops plus an Afghan interpreter were killed in the attack. They had faced more than 50 enemy insurgents armed with machine guns, assault rifles, and rocket-propelled grenades during a 6-hour firefight.

Now a sergeant, Meyer combines his great heroism with great humility. He said:

This isn't about me. If anything comes out of it for me, it's for those guys.

He left Active-Duty service in June 2010 and currently serves in the Inactive Ready Reserve of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve.

I know my colleagues join me in saluting SGT Dakota Meyer for his extraordinary display of selfless valor, for which he will be awarded the Medal of Honor at a White House ceremony this afternoon. He may not think of himself as a hero, but his country certainly does. His heroism and meritorious service has already been recognized in the many awards, medals, and decorations he has received, including the Purple Heart Medal, the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with "V" Device for valor, the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, the Good Conduct Medal, and the Combat Action Ribbon.

His fellow Kentuckians and an entire grateful Nation thank him for his service. Brave men and women like him honor us and our country and make us proud that America boasts the finest Armed Forces in the world.

#### THE ECONOMY

Mr. McCONNELL. It has been 1 week now since the President unveiled his second stimulus. Today, 1 week later, White House aides are expected to hold a briefing to explain it all to the Democrats who do not understand the details.

One would think they would want to be briefed on details before the President demanded they pass it right away, not after. Then, again, the White House probably expected stronger support from Democrats than it has gotten so far. After all, this bill's top selling point, according to the President, is that both parties should like it. Yet so far the only thing both parties in Congress seem to agree on is there has to be a better way.

Earlier this week, after several of us suggested the President would have a hard time convincing Members of his own party to support this plan, a number of them have proved us right. While the President was in Ohio insisting over and over that Congress pass the bill, it seemed as though the only Democrats who were even willing to talk about it on Capitol Hill were tearing it apart. We had the Democratic majority leader basically treating it like a legislative afterthought. One freshman Senator called parts of the bill frustrating and unfair. Another Democrat called a central part of the bill terrible. One veteran Democrat was tamping down expectations of it passing in one piece. Another veteran Democrat suggested a completely different approach to jobs. I know the President and his advisers are keen on this idea of making Republicans look bad, but from what I can tell, he has a big problem at the moment lining up supporters in his own party.

That brings me to the real issue. The truth is, the President has a problem that no amount of political strategizing can solve: His economic policies simply have not worked. Yet he and his advisers seem to be the only folks in Washington who are not ready to admit it. We are in the middle of a crisis. The average length of unemployment is at an alltime high. Median income is going down instead of up. Poverty levels are higher than they have ever been in two decades. Millions of Americans cannot find work. The numbers just keep getting worse and the President's solution is to demand another Washington stimulus bill. Is that because the first one worked out so well?

The first stimulus is a national punch line: turtle tunnels, sidewalks to nowhere, and now we are hearing reports that the White House fast-tracked a \$½ billion loan to a politically connected energy firm that their own analyst said was not ready for prime time. This place, this energy firm, was supposed to be the poster child of how the original stimulus would create jobs. Now it is bankrupt and most of its 1,100 employees are out of work. And they want another stimulus?